

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 8 continue to be in the case.

The amendments to the specification are based on Figs. 1 and 2. The amendment in the specification on Page 8, line 16, after "8", is in part based on claim 1, line 5 as originally filed. The amendment in the specification on page 16, line 8, is provided for clarifying the operation of the flow diagram of Fig. 6.

Claim 3 is being amended.

Applicant's attorney thanks the Examiners Dolores R. Collins and Benjamin Layno for the personal interview kindly granted on August 29, 2000. The courtesies exchanged during the interview are very much appreciated.

The first Office Action refers to the Drawings.

1. The drawings stand objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5), because they include the following reference sign(s) not

mentioned in the description: Reference character " 15 " is shown in Fig. 1 but not mentioned in the specification. Reference characters " 14 ", " 16 ", " 17 ", " 18 ", " 19 " and " 23 " are shown in figure 2 but not mentioned in the specification.

Correction is required.

Applicant is correcting the specification on pages 8 and 9 in this amendment in order to mention the reference characters " 14 ", " 16 ", " 17 ", " 18 ", " 19 " and " 23 " in the specification.

Examiner acknowledges in the final rejection applicant's representative's indication that a separate supplemental response which addresses the drawings will be filed at a later date.

Such supplemental response had been prepared by the Applicant, but as the undersigned attorney was under the impression based on the personal interview of August 29, 2000 that a further Office Action in response to applicant's Amendment filed August 24, 2000 would not be issued earlier than a month after the personal interview. However the Final Rejection

issued on September 15, 2000 did cut short this time and an already prepared Supplemental Amendment could no longer be submitted.

1. Applicant is required to submit a proposed drawing correction in reply to this Office action. However, formal correction of the noted defect can be deferred until the application is allowed by the Examiner. Applicant believes that the amendments now made to the specification obviate a necessity for any drawing changes.

The Office Action refers to the Specification.

2. This application does not contain an abstract of the disclosure as required by 37 CFR 1.72(b). An abstract on a separate sheet is required. An Abstract of the Disclosure is attached to the present submission.

The Office Action refers to Claim Rejections
- 35 U.S. C § 102.

3. Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Vancura. Vancura discloses Gaming Machines with Bonusing. In his game he teaches the playing of a bonus game in a secondary machine adjacent to a primary machine. Vancura's invention substantially teaches the limitations as claimed.

Vancura teaches according to the Final Rejection:

Referring to Claim 1, 3 & 7 that the primary machine acts as a traditional slot machine (col. 18, lines 22-24) that the primary gaming machine can be a suitable gaming machine, such as, slot, poker, keno etc.; and the accumulating of winnings in an award meter (col. 17, lines 44-54).

Claim 1 of the present application requires the step of: "substituting a symbol by another randomly determined symbol;". No such step is seen in the Vancura reference.

Claim 1 of the present application further requires the step of: "renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a winning carrying symbol combination is reached;" No such step of claim 1 is alleged to be or seen in the reference Vancura.

Claim 3 requires amongst others the following seven steps:

"determining if the depressed key is a hand out key or a hold key in case a key had been depressed;";

"randomly drawing cards not being held in case the hand out key had been depressed;"

"holding cards in case the hold key had [beewn] been depressed;"

"actualize the intermediate state;"

"determining if a certain winning combination had been reached;"

"randomly drawing again all cards if the certain winning combination had been reached;"

"determining again if the game time has ended if the certain winning combination had not been reached".

The Office Action does not allege that these steps are present in the Vancura reference and the applicant does not find these steps in the Vancura reference. Consequently, it is respectfully submitted that the seven recited steps up to now unaccounted for in the Vancura reference define the present invention over the Vancura reference.

Claim 7 requires the following three steps of:

"wherein a symbol can be substituted by another randomly determined symbol,"

"wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device (2),"

"wherein the symbols can be renewed within a predetermined time window, until the winning carrying symbol combination is reached,".

The Office Action makes no showing where these three steps are present in the Vancura reference. The applicant is also not able to find these three steps of claim 7 in the Vancura reference. Consequently, it is believed that the three recited steps define the present invention patentably over the Vancura reference.

The Final Rejection then says that referring to Claim 2 & 8 a secondary machine (claim 1); a bonus qualifying signal, to play a bonus game on the secondary machine, when a predetermined combination of symbols is obtain (col. 18, lines 24-28); determining the winning values and accumulating winnings in the specific winning machine (claim 1).

Claim 2 requires the following steps:

"simultaneously switching the played entertainment automats (1) into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter;"

"determining in a game mode the entertainment automat, which has reached the highest winning value within a time window predetermined by the control unit;"

"coordinating the winning value to that entertainment automat, which entertainment automat has reached the highest winning within the time limited game mode."

While the Final Rejection refers to playing a bonus game, the Final Rejection clearly fails to show, where the details of the requirements of the three recited steps of claim 2 can be found in the Vancura reference. Applicant believes that these three recited steps of claim 2 are clearly not taught in the Vancura reference. Consequently, it is submitted that claim 2 clearly defines the present invention over the art Vancura.

Claim 8 requires the following three steps of:

"wherein the played entertainment automats (1) are simultaneously switched into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter,"

" wherein in the game mode is determined at which entertainment automat (1) the highest winning value is reached within a time window predetermined by the control unit (7),"

"wherein the winning value is coordinated to that entertainment automat (1), which entertainment automat (1) has reached the highest winning within the time limited game mode".

While the Final Rejection alleges that "winnings are accumulated" according to Vancura, the clauses in claim 8 have completely different requirements. For example the second one of the three clauses requires "a time window predetermined by the control unit (7)". No such time window is seen in the Vancura reference.

The Final the states referring to Claim 4:

* a bonus qualifying event determined after the primary machine is activated (col. 3, lines 18-20 and col.4, lines 55-64).

Claim 8 in fact requires: "determining if a special symbol combination or a jackpot winning value has been reached after inserting payment into the automatic entertainment automat."

Applicant urges that there is a patentable difference between "a bonus qualifying event determined after the primary machine is activated" according to Vancura and "determining if a special symbol combination or a jackpot winning value has been reached after inserting payment into the automatic entertainment automat."

Applicant urges that the step of reaching "a special symbol combination or a jackpot winning value" is clearly different from "determining a bonus qualifying event".

Applicant consequently submits that claim 4 defines the invention over the Vancura reference.

The Office Action then says: Referring to Claim 5 & 6

* a secondary machine (claim 1); the use a processor to facilitate all the functions of the primary (master) and secondary (slave) machines (see figure 50); a bonus/jackpot (claim 12); , collecting the game results of the secondary machine in the primary machine (col. 16, lines 62-67); that the

primary machine can be used as a slot, poker or keno machine (col. 5, lines 14-20)

The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 6 requires in particular a presence of the following nine steps:

"determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a master function;"

"determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a slave function;"

"determining if a jackpot filling level has reached a predetermined release amount;"

"starting a jackpot game at the entertainment automat performing the slave function;"

"waiting till the slave is ready;"

"activating the game time for the entertainment automats;"

"randomly drawing all cards;"

"determining if a game time has ended;"

"distributing of the game results to the slave entertainment automat by the master entertainment automat;
calculating of the winning amount;"
"displaying the winning amount".

The Office Action clearly fails to show a presence of anyone of said nine steps. For example, the alleged "use a processor to facilitate functions", the element "bonus/jackpot" or alleged different uses of the primary machine do not anticipate or render obvious the specific nine steps recited in claim 5.

Applicant urges that claim 5 is clearly allowable.

Claim 6 requires the following two steps:

"sending a readiness signal to the master entertainment automat;"
"waiting by the slave entertainment automat for an activation of the game time through the master entertainment automat".

Applicant respectfully submits that there is neither an allegation nor a showing in the Final Rejection that these specific steps are anywhere suggested in the Vancura reference.

Applicant respectfully urges withdrawal of the rejection of applicants claims under 35 U.S.C. 102.

The present amendment is intended to present claims which are deemed to be in better form for appeal. The present amendment is deemed to remove and/or simplify issues which would otherwise require consideration in an appeal.

The present amendment is believed not to present any new issues since the claims are substantially based on previously presented claims and since such limitations had been individually submitted earlier and had been considered earlier.

It is submitted that the amendment is a bona fide attempt to advance the prosecution by amendments to the claims seeking to overcome rejections based on the applied prior art and/or rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112.

It is submitted that the present amendment complies with observations made in the Final Rejection.

Reconsideration of all outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

It is believed that in view of the above amendments a personal interview would be beneficial in the above application to place the application in condition for allowance in case there should be any remaining questions. The granting of such interview is respectfully requested.

Entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested. All claims as presently submitted are deemed to be in form for allowance and an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS**IN THE CLAIMS:**

3. (twice amended) A method for operating a coin operated entertainment automat comprising inserting payment into an automatic entertainment automat; activating a game time after receiving the payment by the automatic entertainment machine; randomly drawing all cards; determining if a game time has ended; displaying the winning values in case the game time has ended; determining if a key has been depressed in case the game time has not yet ended; determining if the depressed key is a hand out key or a hold key in case a key had been depressed;

randomly drawing cards not being held in case the hand out key had been depressed;

holding cards in case the hold key had [beewn] been depressed;

actualize the intermediate state;

determining if a certain winning combination had been reached;

randomly drawing again all cards if the certain winning combination had been reached;

determining again if the game time has ended if the certain winning combination had not been reached.

IN THE SPECIFICATION (Marked-up version)**Page 7 of the specification, last line**

Figure 4 is a view of a diagram showing a flow diagram for determining a winning value in a supplemental game,

Figure 5 is a view of a diagram showing a flow diagram for determining a winning value with networked entertainment automats, when this entertainment automat assumes the master function,

Figure 6 is a view of a diagram showing a flow diagram for determining a winning value for an entertainment automat operating as a slave in a network,

Figure 7 is a view of a diagram showing a flow diagram for determining a jackpot winning value at an entertainment automat operating as a master in a network, and

Figure 8 is a view of a diagram showing a flow diagram for determining a jackpot winning value at an entertainment automat operating as a slave.

DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION AND PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A coin operated entertainment automat designated with reference numeral 1 includes a start button 15 and a symbol display device 2,

Page 8 of the specification, line 10

which can be formed as a monitor or as a flat picture screen. Operating elements 3 are disposed below the symbol display device 2 in the kind that an operating element 3 is associated to each presented winning symbol. A breakout 4 is furnished neighboring to the symbol display device 2, where a money or bank note testing device follows to the breakout 4. An opening 5 for receiving coins is disposed below the breakout 4. The coin actuated entertainment automat 1 comprises a coin collection position, not illustrated in detail, with a payout device 18. The course control is performed by way of a control unit 7 comprising a microcomputer 8, wherein the control unit 7 controls the total and complete game course and function course of the coin actuated entertainment automat 1.

The device groups required for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat 1 are illustrated as a block circuit diagram in figure 2. The entertainment automat 1 comprises a symbol game device 2

comprising a picture screen tube or, respectively, a flat picture screen, by way of which symbol combinations are presented and displayed, wherein a winning value of different level is coordinated to some of the symbol combinations. The symbol game device 2 is connected to a control unit 7 by way of an intermediary

Page 9 of the specification, lines 11 and 16

of video controller 6 having a symbol memory storage. The control unit 7 of the coin actuated entertainment automat 1 comprises a microcomputer 8 with the calculating circuit 9, a control circuit 10 and accumulators 11. The programs, such as pseudo random number generator program, winning value recognition program, display control program, and winning plan program, required, are contained in a fixed value memory storage (read only memory ROM) 12. The for each entered game determined pseudo random numbers are intermediately stored in an operating data memory storage (random access memory RAM) 13 connected to a bus system 19. In addition, obtained values are registered in credit balance counters and other

counters in the operational data memory storage (random access memory RAM) 13.

The control circuit 7 comprises a communications board 20 in addition to a microcomputer 8 connected to a power supply 16. An input/output interface 14 is connected to the power supply 8. A coin is tested in the coin testing device 17 connected to the input/output interface 14. The display means 21 of a jackpot and a data exchange and data balancing of the entertainment automat 1 disposed in the communications network are controlled by the communications board 20. In addition, the microcomputer 8 includes a serial interface not illustrated. A connection is furnished to the communications board 20 with the serial interface (TTL-level). The serial interface is formed as an RS 232

Page 10 of the specification, line 4

interface.

The communications board 20 comprises a self-contained CPU 22 (Hitachi 64 180 or a Zilog Z80 180) with the serial interface [32] 23

disposed on the CPU side. The central processing unit CPU 22 has coordinated a fixed value memory storage 24 (read only memory ROM) of the type 27C 1000/2000 and a battery buffered operating data storage 25 (random access memory RAM) of the type DS 1225/1230Y. The connection between the central processing unit CPU 22, the memory components 24, 25 and a serial communications controller 28 (Zilog Z85 C30) with the serial ports is performed by way of an address decoder 26 and an I/O decoder 27 and a bus. A serial port 29 of the communications controller 28 leads under connection of a power amplifier 30 (MAX483 or MAX487) to the display means 21 formed as a large display field, with which the temporary jackpot stand is displayed. An external personal-computer not illustrated is connectable at an interface 31 of the communications controller 28 formed as an RS 232 interface. An interface adapter 33 is connected at a serial interface 32 of the communications controller 28 formed as a serial interface RS 485. The interface adapter 33 comprises essentially an optical coupler 35 of the type 6 N 136 for galvanic

Page 16 of the specification, line 8

from the card storage in the operational block 43. The winning value of the displayed symbol combination is determined and displayed in the operational block 44. In the following it is checked in the branching block 45, if the maximum winning value, for example a Royal Flush, is displayed with the symbol display device 2. In case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value, a return is performed from the [operational block 45] branching block 45 to the branching block 39 by checking the game time. In case of a reaching of the maximum winning value, a return is performed from the branching block 45 to the operational block 38, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the operational block 38 and are displayed with the symbol display device 2. Upon remaining of a residual game time the winning symbols displayed with the symbol display device 2 can be held in the following by activation of the operational

element 3 (operational block 42, operational block 46) or all cards held so far can be thrown out by actuation of the entry block 41.

A return is performed from the branching block 45 to the branching block 39 by checking if the game time has ended. In case of an ended game time, the actualized winning value is determined in the operational block 47 and is displayed with a coordinated display means 21 not illustrated in detail. A return is performed from the operational block 47 to the operational block 36 by

Page 21 of the specification, line 4

base game. It is monitored in the operational block 54, if an okay signal was returned by all slaves. In the following the special game is started at the same time in all participating coin actuated entertainment [automat] automats 1.

The entertainment automat 1 is activated in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake. The total game time is monitored by the

operational block 37. The winning symbols are randomly determined by the control unit 7 not illustrated in detail and are displayed (operational block 38) with the symbol display device 2 within the total game time. A branching block 39 determining the remaining residual game time is activated by the operational block 38. In case of a presence of remaining residual game time, it is checked in a branching block 40, if an operational element 3 disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat 1 was actuated. A return is performed to the branching block 39 if no operational element actuation took place.

In case of actuation of the operational element (entry block 41 - 42) it is checked, which operational element 3 was actuated. In case of actuation of an operational element 3 according to entry block 41, for example five next to each other disposed card symbols are displayed with the symbol display device 2, wherein the